

SIMCHAS TORAH

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

Rav Aharon Kutler was a Torah giant and one of the foremost pioneers of Torah in America. His students listened to his words with thirst, and he directed many Torah luminaries on their path to greatness. Although Rav Aharon had many outstanding character traits, there is one that his students particularly remember.

Whenever Rav Kutler would say the word "Torah" his entire being would light up. Just the mention of this word would elevate him to a state of jubilation. His students would purposely try and get him to say the word "Torah" in order to see his elation upon the mention of this word.

When Rav Baruch Ber would give a Torah class, he was elevated to great heights of joy. His students describe that seeing him give a class was like watching someone dining on a tasty gourmet meal. Torah was the greatest pleasure of his life.

When Rav Chaim Brisker was a young student there was a gathering of rabbanim in Europe to hear his first "chabura" (talmudic discourse). He spoke on the topic of "heilich", one of the most complicated sections of the Talmud. After his first class the rabbi's were so happy that the next generation had been blessed with such a genius, when he finished they all got in a circle and danced in the Beis Medrash.

Most of us are not at the level of these Torah luminaries, but we also enjoy Torah learning according to our personal levels. In addition to the happiness of studying Torah, the halacha says that the blessing on Torah should be recited with great joy (Mishna Berura 47,2). Let us investigate its halachos, so that we can express our joy about Torah learning.

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